

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received AUG 11 1986

date entered SEP 24 1986

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic The Historic Resources of Waxahachie, Texas (Partial Inventory of Architectural and
Historic Properties)
and/or common

2. Location

street & number The 1985 city limits of Waxahachie, Texas N/A not for publication

city, town Waxahachie N/A vicinity of

state Texas code 048 county Ellis code 139

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	N/A yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> multiple resources	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

4. Owner of Property

name See individual site forms

street & number N/A

city, town N/A N/A vicinity of state N/A

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Ellis County Courthouse

street & number Courthouse Square

city, town Waxahachie state Texas

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Texas Historic Sites Inventory has this property been determined eligible? N/A yes ☒ no

date July 1985 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Texas Historical Commission

city, town Austin state Texas

7. Description

Condition Check one Check one x see individual site forms
☐ excellent ☐ deteriorated ☐ unaltered ☐ original site
☐ good ☐ ruins ☐ altered ☐ moved date _____
☐ fair ☐ unexposed
x see individual site forms x see individual site forms

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Sufficient written and physical records have survived for Waxahachie to permit a detailed reconstruction of the way late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Americans built a city and created a social order. The community's diverse history is well documented in its rich remaining architectural fabric. The large number of extant turn-of-the-century structures, the handsome courthouse square, and intact late nineteenth- to early twentieth-century suburban developments that typify a local adaptation to a national living pattern distinguish the town. Since 1850 Waxahachie has served as the seat of county government, as a regional marketplace, and as an educational community. The many denominations that established local congregations were responsible in large measure for much of the city's educational and social facilities and history, as universities and the Chautauqua movement were operated and sponsored under their aegis. In the twenty years following 1890, increased cotton production, an expanding cotton market and commercial sector, and continued growth of rail service combined to create a healthy local market economy. The commercial structures positioned around the courthouse square (Ellis County Courthouse Historic District, National Register 1975) and the fine dwellings found throughout the city provide testimony of this prosperity. Four areas of high concentrations of historic properties--the West End Historic District, the Oldham Avenue Historic District, the Wyatt Street Shotgun Houses Historic District, and the North Rogers Street Historic District--have been identified as historic districts within this Multiple-Resource nomination. Because the present submission was the follow-up phase of a comprehensive historic-resources survey of the town, site numbers assigned during the survey effort are used. Individual properties being nominated are noted as "N.R. Sites." Structures within any of the historic districts are identified by their site number, which is then followed by the district in which the building is located. Properties identified as "Survey Sites" were documented during the survey effort, but because of alterations, or lack of architectural or historic importance, were not eligible for inclusion in the nomination.

General Features of the Town

Waxahachie lies in north-central Texas in an area of gently rolling, highly fertile land that is typical of the Blackland Prairie region. Early settlers were likely drawn by, and formed the original townsite within, the series of creeks that circumscribe the boundaries of the present commercial district. The county courthouse, the fourth structure to occupy the site, is the city's most commanding landmark, and acts as a hub of activity while providing a visual focus from any direction. The hilly topography and the courthouse view are most evident when approach is made from the south.

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Commercial activity has always centered around the courthouse square and the city's commercial center was fixed early between the Missouri-Kansas-Texas (MKT) rail lines on the south and those of the Houston and Texas Central (H&TC) on the north. A secondary, but constituent, commercial artery developed along Elm and Rogers streets, south to the MKT tracks. Early domestic buildings are found in densest numbers both east and west of the business district, with most twentieth-century dwellings positioned north of Marvin Avenue. The original townsite is organized by a grid-like street system; subsequent expansion in each area of town was much less regular.

Early Settlement Period

Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century domestic buildings are the numerically dominant local historic resource. Their numbers include the many vernacular-plan types, especially the L-plan and its modified versions and the I-house form, that are emblematic of period dwellings constructed throughout the Upland and Lowland South. Also included are the more substantial academic and popularly influenced structures that appeared throughout the country at the turn of the century.

Waxahachie has long had close ties to organized religions that served both spiritual and educational functions, and acted as a highly visible social force in the community. The number of religious complexes are evidence of the city's many successful congregations. The Presbyterian Church was responsible also for attracting both the Chautauqua movement and Trinity University to the city, and their facilities have been in continuous use since their construction early in the century. The Sims Library (Site No. 636 - West End Historic District) was sited on the city's finest boulevard and, a few years later, the impressive 1925 Masonic Lodge (Site No. 637 - West End Historic District) was built on adjacent property. Waxahachie's preeminent institutional structure is indisputably the Romanesque Revival courthouse, erected in 1895 to the design of the regionally acclaimed architect, J. Riely Gordon.

In the main, Waxahachie's business community has remained confined to the area surrounding the courthouse square. This fine collection of single-, two-, and three-story structures is mostly rendered in brick and signals the city's profitable commercial life at the turn of the century.

Emory W. Rogers was the first known settler in the area, apparently constructing his log dwelling in 1847 on the site where the Rogers Hotel (Site No. 544 - Ellis County Courthouse Historic District, 1975) now stands. Scanty documentation exists for the earliest period of occupation and no physical remains survive. Written records disclose that in the first decade of settlement, a Methodist Church, jail, and two courthouses were

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constructed amid the domestic buildings. It is likely that the most handsome structure in the young city was the small frame building (Site No. 645 - Ellis County Courthouse Historic District, National Register, 1975), which housed the Ferris & Getzendaner banking concern. Built in 1868, its Greek Revival temple form had been favored by lending institutions for much of the century. Original architectural fabric disappeared in 1873 in the first of several major fires that regularly plagued the town until an adequate fire force was funded in 1883.

An 1876 bird's-eye map documents Waxahachie's early physical plan and built resources. Structures were positioned most compactly around the courthouse square. The greatest number at the town's center were commercial, but others were clearly domestic buildings. A courthouse already figured prominently in the townscape, as did a church located at the corner of Elm and West Main streets. Buildings were sited in greatest numbers along the north/south streets of Monroe, Elm, and Lafayette (now Rogers). Other concentrations stretched along Kaufman and College streets. Dwellings were scattered down thoroughfares in every direction, most with attendant outbuildings. The majority were depicted as one- and two-room, single-story structures with a gable-end chimney. In many instances an ell or lean-to was incorporated into the roofline. Marvin College, which was founded in 1870 by the Methodist Church, stood alone at the city's northern boundary. Its Gothic structure (razed, 1920) was constructed at the corner of present Marvin and Brown streets, a site now occupied by the Marvin Elementary School building (Survey Site No. 155). An 1880 fire destroyed the south side of the courthouse square, leaving seven structures in ruins. A more extensive fire struck in 1882 when some twenty-five dwellings, the jail, and commercial structures were lost in the area of the original townsite.

Years of Prosperity

Waxahachie experienced its period of most substantial growth from 1890 to approximately 1920. An expanding rail system and a sound cotton market provided the underpinnings of a healthy, agricultural economy. A detailed description of the commercial district that encircles the courthouse square can be found in the National Register submission of 1975 for the Ellis County Courthouse Historic District. This nomination also documents the location and appearance of structures associated with the rail and cotton industries. With the courthouse as its linchpin, the area is marked by a visual cohesion made possible by the use of common building materials, similarity of architectural styles, and a near uniform scale. At the turn of the century retail operations filled the majority of first levels, while professional offices often occupied the upper stories. Large-scale

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complexes -- flour and corn mills, cotton gins, platforms and yards, oil seed mills and cotton compresses, and storage facilities -- paralleled the rail tracks north and south of the center of town, signifying the predominance of the market-crop economy.

Wagon yards and livery stables were found just beyond the square in each direction at the turn of the century, providing a gradual transition between commercial and residential districts. A period of real estate speculation was initiated as the handsome physical setting and flourishing economy proved attractive. Bullard's Addition was mapped in 1892 and enlarged in 1898 in the southwestern part of the city around the elaborate late Victorian dwelling, Rosemont (National Register, 1982), located at 701 S. Rogers (Site No. 1464). Parceling and sale of land was especially active east and west of downtown. The popularity of local fairs and the introduction of public transportation into these areas ensured the financial success of the ventures and sped their development. Impetus for the improvement of the East End was provided by the Ellis County Fair Association in 1887, the date when it began construction of a fairground. Following fairs in 1887 and 1888, the land was sold to the M. T. Jones Lumber Company. Lumbermen worked in tandem with businessmen to build suburban Waxahachie, and in 1891 the Park Hill Addition was laid along East Marvin Avenue toward the fairgrounds. Streetcar tracks from the Lake Park Street Railway connected that development to the city. The fine houses in Queen Anne and Neoclassical Revival style that line East Marvin Avenue date from this period.

Waxahachie's West End was developed in much the same manner when area businessmen organized the Waxahachie Investment Company in 1889. The West End Addition was platted in that same year and the area between Highland Avenue, east to the business district, and West Marvin Avenue, south to Jefferson Street, was divided into lots, parks, and large-size parcels which perhaps anticipated industrial development. A mule-drawn streetcar line serviced the area by 1890. The park-like setting, the large lot sizes, and the "natural" forms of the irregularly shaped cottages and Victorian dwellings of the West End development took form under the guidance of the garden suburb movement of the late nineteenth century. The asymmetrical forms of the Dunlap-Simpson House and the dwelling at 600 W. Jefferson (Site Nos. 610 and 834, respectively - West End Historic District) represent the earliest occupation of the area. Fine vernacular examples such as the T-plan houses at 1008 W. Main (Site No. 517 - West End Historic District) and the L-plan dwelling at 513 W. Jefferson (Site No. 886 - West End Historic District) were also introduced into the neighborhood. During the first decade of this century Neoclassical Revival and Georgian Revival dwellings, including those at 600 W. Main and 903 W. Main (Site Nos. 530 and 624 - West End Historic District), appeared as infill.

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To reinforce the park-like imagery of the area, the Waxahachie Investment Company built an ellipse (Site No. 496 - West End Historic District) at the lower end of the street, directing traffic up one side and streetcar tracks on the other. Fort Worth architect S. Wemyes Smith designed the classically inspired Nicholas P. Sims Library and Lyceum (Site No. 636 - West End Historic District) and sited the building at the back of a deep lot with the surrounding open space treated in a park-like fashion. The temple-form First Presbyterian Church (Site No. 640 - West End Historic District), now used as the Fine Arts Museum, and the stark, clean lines of the Masonic Lodge (Site No. 637 - West End Historic District) contribute to the grand, formal character of the area. Both were constructed early in the century.

The West End is also the site of the City Auditorium (Waxahachie Chautauqua National Register nomination, 1973), built originally to house the activities of those who arrived each summer to participate in the Chautauqua programs. The first Chautauqua was held in Waxahachie in 1899 under the sponsorship of the Presbyterian Church, and the city was the site of the annual gathering until the 1920s. The movement rose after the Civil War and its original religious thrust was expanded to include general entertainment and educational programs. The local Sappho Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle for Young Ladies was organized in 1889, and by 1902 the summer Chautauqua program had become popular enough to warrant the construction of the eight-sided frame meeting facility in the west end of town.

The city's neighborhoods were extended farther in 1902, when the Presbyterian Church relocated their Trinity University to Waxahachie. The impressive stone and brick, three-story administration building (Site No. 13 - included in the Second Trinity University Campus submission) still functions as an educational facility. Other important campus buildings include the Renaissance-inspired Drane Hall and the gymnasium (Site Nos. 12 and 14 - Second Trinity University Campus). The move stimulated the expansion of the housing market once again, and the neighborhood around the University took shape in the early years of the century. The University Addition, platted in 1901 between Highland and Cynisca streets, and West Marvin Street and the campus, was the first and most extensive of the developments. Original lot sizes were generous, while long streets were set on axis to the campus. Streetcar service tied the area to the city. Traditional forms embellished with late Victorian or Neoclassical Revival details were the choice of most early builders; however, in the second decade of the century, bungalows were built in large numbers throughout the neighborhood. At the same time, bungalows were also introduced into the West Main area. The city's exceptional Mission-style bungalows (Site Nos. 629 and 612 - West End Historic District) are found at 717 and 1109 West Main, but examples of the popular versions that were built with frequency throughout the country are also in evidence at 701 and 708 West Main (Site Nos. 633 and 528 - West End Historic District).

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Institutional structures of compatible scale and design were constructed throughout the city's residential districts. The frame Gothic St. Paul's Episcopal Church (N.R. Site No. 1311) at 308 N. Monroe is the oldest church in continuous use in the city. Gothic imagery was also the choice of other congregations who erected handsome edifices throughout this century, such as the Central Presbyterian Church at 402 N. College (N.R. Site No. 1542). The nationally notable black architect William Sidney Pittman was responsible for the 1917 Joshua Chapel A.M.E. Church (N.R. Site No. 1907), and his design also made reference to the favored nineteenth- and twentieth-century ecclesiastical style. Representing the role of public buildings in imparting a sense of scale, character, and identity to the community, the Sims Library, which functioned as the center of the town's cultural life, was erected on the most important street in town. The handsome Federal Building (Ellis County Courthouse Historic District), now the City Hall, was constructed in 1914 in a classical style that represents the aesthetic preference of the time, and was sited just off the courthouse square.

By the late nineteenth century, blacks were segregated into an enclave east of the commercial core. East Main Street was developed as a separate business district, with grocery and drug stores, tailor shops, and restaurants among the many facilities that operated in the area. The 1914 Sanborn map identifies an interesting structure as the Negro Airdome, indicating a moving-picture machine at one end and a stage at the other. Located on Tuggle Street off East Main, the building had disappeared by 1925. Some of the city's earliest and most architecturally provocative domestic structures stand in the area. The single-cell frame dwelling at 106 Will Street (razed, Site No. 1728) and the large frame dwelling at 716 E. Jefferson (Survey Site No. 912) are of special interest. While there are several shotgun dwellings interspersed through this neighborhood, the row at 302-314 Wyatt Street is of particular note and is being nominated as a historic district.

The twentieth-century city was stabilized by the sustained growth of the cotton industry. In 1901 the Waxahachie Cotton Mill (Survey Site No. 418) was opened, and the company was apparently responsible for constructing a number of identical dwellings on the property surrounding the mill. A 1914 Sanborn map also identified a boarding house (razed) that was adjacent to the mill. Although most of the dwellings are too altered to be considered for nomination to the National Register, one exists in near-intact form (N.R. Site No. 460) and is nominated as a representative example. By approximately 1920, the Texas Oil Products Company had built a new refinery in Waxahachie which boosted the local housing market. In addition to the familiar bungalow forms that were built, a new domestic building type--the apartment--was introduced to the city. The two apartment

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blocks (Site Nos. 780 and 781 - West End Historic District) standing at 420 and 422 Franklin Street are fine examples of the type as built throughout the country early in the century. In order to attract residents, who at first viewed the new building type with some suspicion and anxiety, builders often attempted to mass and decorate the structures so as to make them more residential in appearance. The low-rise, rectangularly-massed Franklin Street apartments, with their individual entries and porches, exhibit just such an effect.

The fabric and physical form of the city changed in the first quarter of the new century, especially because of the introduction of the automobile. The clean edges of town which distinguished the business from the residential areas began to erode. In an early manifestation of renewal projects, stables and feed stores were replaced by garages and electric motor service; additionally, houses on the edge of town were pulled down to make way for service stations and parking lots. Streets were widened, some were paved for the first time, and directional signs were posted down the streets or painted onto the pavement. Historic photographs indicate the manner in which local businesses reoriented to auto traffic. Store fronts were remodeled to allow for large display windows, while signage increased in size, extended out from the building, and was often lighted at night. Few buildings, however, were extensively remodeled or demolished, although changes made on the south side of the courthouse square were an exception to this rule.

Architectural Development: Types and Styles

In charting the history of Waxahachie's domestic building arts, certain characteristics remain relatively uniform. The majority of dwellings in the city are of frame construction, and it is only the rare exception like the Solon House (N. R. Site No. 1963) that featured masonry construction. Single-story construction is favored over multistory, and most builders selected traditional plan types, to which they grafted popular architectural details.

The city's earliest recorded structure was founder Rogers' log dwelling, which was either a single- or double-cell plan. Rogers probably emigrated to the state from an area with a tradition of hewn-log construction. Although few remain in the city, the single-cell and double-cell, single-pile houses that stand at 106 Will (Site No. 1728, razed March 1986) and 201 Thompson (Survey Site No. 1823) are examples of vernacular dwellings found in large numbers throughout the Lowland South. Their form connects them to building traditions that had been in place for hundreds of years. Several two-story, single-pile dwellings with center passages - commonly known as I houses - were built in Waxahachie. This plan was the

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most visible form on the landscape of the Upland South from 1740-1920 and indicates the geographical origins of some nineteenth-century settlers who relocated to the city. The house at 409 Kaufman (N.R. Site No. 1742), with its symmetrical form and Greek Revival architectural elements, is a particularly fine local example of the I house. Vernacular builders extracted ideas and details from new architectural designs and incorporated them into their traditional practices. This reflected important "modern" thought and was considered to affect the public taste in a positive way. Such is the case with the I house at 816 Cantrell (N. R. Site No. 1734) where three cross gables have been introduced into the design, thus reflecting the picturesque influence of nineteenth-century Gothic architecture.

Shotgun-plan houses, often associated with the settlement of blacks in the urban and delta regions of the Lower South, are found with some frequency in east Waxahachie. The row at 302-314 Wyatt St. (Site Nos. 732 through 738) is especially intact and is being nominated as a historic district. While predictable in form, the construction date of these houses is difficult to discern, and many area shotgun-plan types appear to have been pieced together.

The synthesis of popular architectural ideals with traditional architectural forms in the late nineteenth century produced plan types which were built in substantial numbers throughout the country. These L-plan and T-plan forms found wide expression in Waxahachie, and the L-plan and its slightly modified versions are the city's dominant house type. Both are found in single- and two-story versions, although the former are more common. The asymmetrical form of these houses satisfied the desire for more natural shapes important to nineteenth-century aesthetic ideals, and the jigsawed decoration that often embellishes the porch and cornice provides evidence of the builders' desire for fashionability.

Local builders were widely attracted to the complex, asymmetrically massed Queen Anne style, as illustrated by the picturesque dwellings at 1201 E. Marvin and 209 N. Grand (N.R. Site Nos. 184 and 967). However, most builders and their clients responded to these popular, published designs by incorporating elements of the Queen Anne style into the common, modified L-plan form. The process was repeated many times throughout the city as the steeply pitched roofs, polygonal towers and multiple sheathing materials typical of the Queen Anne were used to enrich the familiar house type. At the turn of the century, as the features of the Neoclassical Revival replaced those of the Queen Anne, this conservative design practice was continued. The Hawkins House at 210 S. Hawkins (Site No. 1254 - West End Historic District) ably demonstrates the melding of traditional form and the then-fashionable classically inspired detail.

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Widely promoted in the architectural press and women's magazines, and readily available by catalogue order or from local lumberyards, bungalows were the most popular house type in the nation by the second decade of the twentieth century. Fine examples of bungalows and Prairie Style houses are in evidence in most city neighborhoods. The bungalows at 411 W. Marvin (Survey Site No. 212) and 200 East University (N.R. Site No. 1085)—with their wide overhanging roofs, exposed rafter ends, triangular braces, and sloped foundations—are representative expressions of the house type. Local examples are usually simply massed frame buildings that lack the intricate details or multiple building materials associated with finer Craftsmen-influenced bungalows. The dwellings at 603 and 902 West Marvin (N.R. Site Nos. 210 and 148) are laudable Prairie Style buildings, whose large brick piers, horizontal emphasis, porch urns, and broad eaves are characteristic features.

Public and institutional structures were important expressions of civic pride, and as such, were the most carefully designed and stylistically ambitious structures in the city. J. Riely Gordon set high standards with his acclaimed Romanesque design for the Ellis County courthouse, and subsequent commercial development around the square was designed to be compatible, but not to compete. With few exceptions these structures, usually rendered in brick, are simply massed with ornament limited to corbeled or parapetted cornices.

Survey Methods

The comprehensive survey of the city's historic resources was initiated with an overview of Waxahachie. In order that all structures erected prior to 1935 might be identified, each city street was canvassed by the survey teams. Every resource which evidenced a pre-1935 construction date was included in the survey, regardless of its architectural integrity. Its location was also recorded on city street maps. Photographic documentation and a brief written evaluation of the property's physical appearance supplemented this information. The construction materials, number of stories, plan type, and stylistic details of each site were recorded. In addition, a preliminary assessment of each property's relative significance was noted, thereby establishing priorities for subsequent research and detailed photographic documentation. All data resulting from the overview were used to generate a historic-resources inventory that functioned as the basis for ensuing fieldwork and archival research.

The survey identified 1,988 structures or sites of architectural or historical import. Each was documented by a combination of both black-and-white and color-slide photography. All resources were photographed at least once. Additional black-and-white detail shots and color slides expanded

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documentation of those resources with architectural or historical significance. Detailed descriptions and an architectural analysis of the more important sites were recorded on Texas Historic Sites Inventory Forms.

Additional documentation of the resources was effected by the project historian during the research phase of the survey. Synthesizing data from such primary sources as tax rolls, mechanic's liens, Sanborn maps, cemetery records, and city directories, yielded a framework with which to evaluate the resources. Although the destruction of the county tax records prior to 1918 hampered research, valuable information was garnered from public records at the Ellis County Tax Office and the Ellis County Records Building in Waxahachie. In addition, the genealogical collection, vertical files, and newspaper microfilm collection at the Sims Library proved invaluable aids to research. The historic photograph collection and the vertical files at the Ellis County Museum afforded additional opportunities to document resources. In Austin, the facilities of the State Library, the Research Department of the Texas Historical Commission, and the Barker Texas History Center at the University of Texas provided substantive information. Further insights into the historical development of Waxahachie were gained from a master's thesis written by Margaret Felty. Questionnaires mailed to owners of the more significant properties further expanded knowledge of individual sites. The information gathered in this phase was recorded on Research Data Sheets which have been presented to Historic Waxahachie, Inc.

When all fieldwork and research phases were completed, each survey property was assigned a HIGH, MEDIUM, or LOW preservation priority rating. Based on its architectural integrity and historical association, documented sites were evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

HIGH PRIORITY - Contributes significantly to local history or broader historical patterns; is an outstanding or unique example of architecture, engineering, or crafted design; retains a significant portion of its original character and contextual integrity; meets, in some cases, criteria for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places or is eligible for a Texas Historical Marker.

MEDIUM PRIORITY - Contributes significantly to local history or broader historical patterns, but alterations have diminished the resource's integrity; is a significant example of architecture, engineering, or crafted design; is an outstanding example of a common local building form, architectural style, or type; is a modern or recent landmark not old enough to be judged in a historical context.

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LOW PRIORITY - Typifies a common local building form, architectural style, or type, with no identified historical associations; is a moderate to severely altered resource with reversible modifications that exemplifies a distinctive building type or architectural style, or that has only minor historical significance.

Properties included in the HIGH category were automatically considered for National Register designation. All architectural sites were grouped by house type or style, and through a careful analysis, the most outstanding or unique examples were then selected for inclusion in the nomination. Properties with strong associations to important historical events or individuals were identified, and those sites that best represented the established areas of significance were selected for National Register distinction.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) black history

Specific dates see individual site forms **Builder/Architect** see individual site forms

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Waxahachie, county seat of Ellis County, has been an important agricultural, commercial, educational, and transportation center in the north-central Texas region between Dallas and Waco since the town's founding in 1850. The production, processing, and shipping of cotton formed the basis for the city's rapid growth during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and Ellis County eventually became the nation's largest cotton-producing county during the early 1900s. Because the crop played such a pivotal role in the community's development, numerous cotton-related industries, including one of the state's first textile mills, were established in the town. Most were built near one of the three railroads that serviced the community. The vibrant local economy of the late 1800s and early 1900s contributed to a construction boom that resulted in the rapid development of the downtown and created large neighborhoods filled with vernacular and popular house types. For over 40 years Waxahachie was home of Trinity University, a Presbyterian school that moved to town in 1902 but later relocated to San Antonio. As local cotton production declined during the 1930s, Waxahachie's most prosperous era came to an abrupt end. Growth since that time has been slow, thereby saving many of the town's late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century structures. Waxahachie's rich architectural legacy reveals much about local architectural tastes and preferences during the town's most prosperous era. Recognizing the significance of the impressive collection of turn-of-the-century structures, the citizens of Waxahachie have actively participated in the preservation and restoration movement. Four individual properties and one historic district are already listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and this nomination proposes to add 69 individual sites, a university complex with three structures, and four historic districts for similar designation.

significance

named for early Texas leader Richard Ellis, president of the Texas Constitutional Convention of 1836, Ellis County was created from Navarro County when settlers in the area successfully petitioned the state legislature for its formation on December 20, 1849. The state legislature also appointed the first county officials, who were to select a seat of government for the newly formed county. These officials rejected two other sites proposed by area landowners and accepted the offer of E. W. Rogers, an

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Alabama native who settled in the area in 1847. Rogers' land, which included his own homestead, was ideal because its location near the county's geographic center satisfied state requirements. The land also seemed favorable for settlement. Two creeks in the area provided good water sources, and the abundance of timber along these waterways provided an ample supply of building materials. The county was officially organized on August 5, 1850, when the first elected officials were sworn into office.

In 1850 Richard Donaldson surveyed the new forty-block townsite, using the Rogers homestead as its primary orientation point. Thus the streets ran "almost exactly northeast to southwest and from northwest to southeast, instead of being laid off in accordance with the cardinal points" (History of Ellis County 1892: 174). The town was dubbed Waxahachie, the name that local Indians had given the creek that ran through the south side of the new town. Literally translated, Waxahachie means buffalo or cow creek.

Growth in the small township was quite slow during the early years of settlement. Most residents were farmers who barely survived the frontier conditions, and the density of development was extremely low. The 1850 Census indicates that only 989 citizens lived in the entire county, and of that amount, 912 were white or "freed coloreds," while 77 were slaves.

Waxahachie evolved into the county's largest and most important township primarily because it was the seat of government. The first courthouse was a simple log structure that, according to minutes of the commissioners' court, was moved from neighboring Dallas County to the north and was in use by 1851. Standing on the public square near the E. W. Rogers' homestead, the courthouse quickly became the center of community activity. The first retail establishments operated nearby, benefiting from the regular flow of people with legal business. A. B. Marchbanks is believed to be the community's first merchant.

Although commercial activity increased, the local economy remained largely agricultural. The primary crops grown, according to the agricultural schedules of the 1850 and 1860 censuses, were wheat, oats, corn, and sweet potatoes. Cattle raising was also an important livelihood among the original settlers. Cotton, which would later become the foundation of the town's late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century prosperity, was grown in small quantities. The Agricultural Schedule of 1860 reveals only 389 bales of cotton were produced in Ellis County. While the fertile land was conducive for cotton cultivation, few realized its potential during the antebellum period because of the difficulty and expense of shipping the crop and the lack of a sufficient labor force.

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The vast majority of settlers who arrived in Waxahachie and Ellis County relocated from other parts of the United States. Census records of 1850 and 1860 reveal that most of these new residents originally hailed from the Upland South. Tennessee was the primary source of settlers to the area, followed by Missouri. By 1860 the county's population had reached 5,246, an increase of over 500% since 1850. Many of the new residents who came from the South brought slaves, swelling the county's slave population to 1,104, a ten-fold increase from ten years earlier. There were 196 slave owners in 1860.

The majority of Ellis County residents chose to secede when the state's voters were asked if Texas should withdraw from the Union. When war erupted and Texas joined the Confederacy, many local able-bodied men joined the Confederate Army, serving with distinction in the Twelfth Texas Cavalry, Parson's Brigade. The Civil War drained Waxahachie of human and capital resources, and growth came to a standstill.

With the war's conclusion, however, Waxahachie experienced renewed economic prosperity and expansion. The courthouse square flourished with activity, and a steady influx of new settlers began to immigrate to the area. As new settlers moved to Waxahachie, the town's economic base became more diversified. One of the earliest manufacturing concerns was the Spalding Brothers Furniture Store and Funeral Parlor, which operated as early as 1870. A small bank, founded by J. W. Ferris and E. P. Nichols was established in the town in 1860, but the Civil War forced its closing soon after it opened. Ferris joined forces with W. H. Getzendaner in 1868 and opened another bank, which operated in the small frame structure (Site No. 645 - Ellis County Courthouse Historic District, National Register 1975) on E. Main Street. Now known as the Citizen's National Bank, the institution is reputed to be one of the oldest in north-central Texas. Other business establishments, such as the Aaron Tripett's mercantile store, opened during the late 1860s and early 1870s, and most were located around the courthouse square.

Religious and social life in the town also diversified as the influx of people necessitated the founding and introduction of new community institutions. The Methodists were the first local religious group to organize, establishing a church in 1849. Others that followed included the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in 1853, First Baptist Church in 1861, the First Presbyterian Church in 1871, St. Paul's Episcopal and St. Joseph's Catholic churches in 1875, and the Main Street Christian Church in 1878. Prior to the Civil War, few churches stood in Waxahachie, and the various congregations agreed to share facilities. The Methodists were the first to build a sanctuary, erecting a small frame structure in 1852 in the 200 block of E. Main. Each of the other congregations was eventually housed in its

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own building but, with one exception, no nineteenth-century sanctuaries survive. St. Paul's Episcopal Church (N. R. Site No. 1311), built in 1887 with Gothic Revival detailing, remains the oldest extant church building in the community. The Waxahachie Masonic Lodge #90 was formed in 1852, and members erected a two-story frame structure with Greek Revival detailing by 1860. It stood on the site of present-day Sims Library (Site No. 636 - West End Historic District), and in addition to serving as a meeting hall for the lodge, the building was used as a school. Local historians believe this to be the town's first educational facility of any consequence. It was known as the Waxahachie or Masonic Academy.

The establishment of Marvin College in 1870-71 proved a great source of civic pride and distinction. Most students hailed from Waxahachie and nearby areas. The Northwest Texas conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church South provided funds for the construction of the college, which was named for E. M. Marvin, bishop of the district. The school stood at the northern edge of town. Bird's-eye maps of Waxahachie, drawn in 1876 and 1886, show that the campus was originally isolated from the town, but residential development eventually encroached on the school. Marvin College operated until 1884, when it closed for financial reasons. The facilities were purchased by the city of Waxahachie for use as a public school. The old building, which stood just north of present-day Marvin Elementary School (Survey Site No. 155), was eventually abandoned and razed in the 1920s.

The 1870s and early 1880s marked a transitional period in Waxahachie's development. The town grew from a small village to a bustling commercial, governmental, and agricultural center in north-central Texas. In 1870 the township of Waxahachie was officially incorporated under state laws, and a mayoral-alderman system of municipal government was adopted. In 1871 the cornerstone for a new county courthouse was laid and the seeming permanence of its stone construction symbolized stability within the community. New buildings of frame, stone, or brick construction replaced the more cruder log or hand-planed lumber dwellings.

The arrival of the railroad at Waxahachie in 1879 affected virtually all aspects of life in the community. Rail service first reached Ellis County in 1871 when the Houston and Texas Central built a line in the eastern part of the county. The railroad's path bypassed Waxahachie, however, running about 15 miles to the east and resulting in the establishment of the town of Ennis. Astute business leaders and other citizens of Waxahachie, quick to realize the vast potential for economic development and prosperity that the railroad represented for the community, organized the Waxahachie Tap Railroad to bring rail service directly to the city. Financial difficulties and mismanagement plagued its construction, yet the tap line was finally completed in September 1879, its path running

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just north of the original townsite. The Houston and Texas Central eventually took control of the operation. The Fort Worth and New Orleans Railroad, later absorbed into the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad system, reached Waxahachie in 1886, and its tracks were built on the south side of town. In 1907 the Trinity and Brazos Valley Railroad established a line that connected Waxahachie with Corsicana to the east.

As was true of so many other communities, the arrival of rail service proved a critical factor in the town's history and development. Waxahachie's dramatic population increase—from 1,354 in 1870 to 3,076 in 1880—provides evidence of that industry's contribution to the local economy. The railroad provided cheap transportation of goods into and out of the community, and merchants had access to goods that previously had been unattainable or too expensive. Areas adjacent to the railroad and near the commercial district developed into the town's primary shipping and industrial centers. Although the Houston and Texas Central Railroad was first to arrive in Waxahachie, the tracks of the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad became the more preferred transportation line.

The cotton industry was perhaps the greatest benefactor, as bales could be shipped more easily, faster, in greater quantities, and for a significantly cheaper price than ever before. Warehouses, cotton yards, compresses, gins, and other cotton-related concerns that relied heavily upon the railroad located in close proximity to the tracks. Gins and cotton yards were most common, as Houston- and Galveston-based cotton merchants purchased locally grown cotton for shipment to the coast. Among the earliest and most significant were the Moffett and Brady Cotton Gin, Farmers' Alliance Cotton Warehouse and Yard, Fowler's Cotton Yard, and the Waxahachie Cotton Yard, none of which still stand. During the 1890s and 1900s, the Ellis County Cottonseed Oil Mill Co., Waxahachie Cotton Compress, National Compress Co., the old and new Waxahachie Cotton Oil Mill factories, and Planters Cotton Oil Co. were established near the tracks. Of these, only the National Compress (N. R. Site no. 1625) and the second Waxahachie Cotton Oil Mill (Ellis County Courthouse Historic District, National Register, 1975) have survived from this extremely significant era in Waxahachie's industrial development.

Numerous other businesses, notably lumber yards, were also established near the rail line. S. H. Sayer, an early publisher and newspaperman in Ellis County, noted in 1880 that "for building and fence purposes we depend principally on getting our supply from the immense pineries of Eastern Texas" (Sayer 1880: 5). The city's first lumberyard, the Houston-based firm of M. T. Jones Lumber Co., was established about 1880 soon after the arrival of the first railroad. The business encompassed much of Block 42A of the Town Addition, standing at the southeast corner of Kaufman Street and the

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tracks of the Houston and Texas Central Railroad. William Lewis, who built an opulent residence (N. R. Site No. 184) for himself on E. Marvin Street, purchased the enterprise by 1893 and operated it for about four years. The business then became the Waxahachie Lumber Co. (N. R. Site No. 1756), supplying building materials for many of the dwellings in the town. By 1925 the firm was known as the Rockwell Lumber Co. Another building-supply operation was the H. D. Timmon Lumber Co., which was in business by 1890. It later became the Dunaway Brothers Lumber Yard by 1914, and then the William Cameron & Co. Lumber Yard (Site No. 1422 - Ellis County Courthouse Historic District, National Register 1975) by the 1920s. This business and its nearby competitor, the H. W. Leeper Lumber Co. (razed, but originally located on the southern parts of Blocks 96 and 97), were serviced by the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad.

Local cotton production reached unprecedented heights during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as Ellis County eventually became the largest cotton-producing county in the nation. Much of the cotton was ginned in or around Waxahachie. The 1880 Agricultural Schedule of the U.S. Census reveals that 52,172 bales were ginned in Ellis County. By 1910 that figure totaled 106,384.

A variety of factors contributed to the rapid growth of the cotton industry in Waxahachie. Obviously, the railroad played a significant role by reducing the cost of transporting the crop to New England or European textile mills, thereby expanding the available markets. Technological advances in textile manufacturing decreased the cost of clothing which, in turn, boosted sales as well as demand for cotton. The wide-spread use of new, more advanced plows and implementation of careful fertilization schedules and crop rotation increased productivity. Weather conditions were generally favorable and area cotton fields were less infested with the boll weevil that destroyed cotton fields in southern Texas. Finally, Waxahachie possessed the human resources necessary for the tremendous expansion of the local cotton industry. It took individuals with the capital to invest in cotton production and an adequate labor force to grow, cultivate, and harvest the crop.

The success of local cotton production led the town's more ambitious and far-sighted business leaders to organize the Waxahachie Cotton Mills Co. in 1899. Most of the capital raised for the construction of the textile mill came from local townspeople who believed they were making investments not only for themselves, but also for the economic prosperity of their community. In 1900 ground was broken for the facility (Survey Site No. 418), and a year later it began operation with 500 spindles and 150 looms. The property originally encompassed about 20 acres on the west side of town

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adjacent to tracks of the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad. The company also built a large boarding house and 24 small, frame dwellings for the textile workers, and this area became known as Cotton Mill Village. Only a few of the houses survive today; the best preserved stands at 816 W. Water (N. R. Site No. 460).

As cotton came to dominate the local economy during the late 1800s, the amount of cotton grown in area fields far surpassed the available labor supply needed to pick the crop. Local business leaders formed a Board of Trade in 1890 to encourage workers to move to Waxahachie and work the fields. E. A. DuBose served as president of the group and "laid out an advertisement program to cope with the labor shortage, and he convinced other members of the Board of Trade to support him. Fifty thousand copies of a folder that gave interesting facts about Waxahachie and Ellis County and told of the farm vacancies for laborers, share croppers, or tenants, were printed and distributed in several other states. Advertisements were also placed in magazines" (Felty 1975: 117).

Many of these workers were blacks, and most settled in the east part of town, especially along E. Main and Wyatt streets. This area developed into a separate and independent community within Waxahachie, as blacks established their own religious, commercial, and social insititutions.

Virtually all of the local black businesses were centered along the 400 to 500 blocks of E. Main Street. The only extant structures include the James Building (N. R. Site No. 562) and the store at 502 E. Main Street (N. R. Site No. 649). The James Funeral Parlor was among the longest-lasting, black-owned businesses in Waxahachie during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A black masonic organization, Pythagoras Lodge #87, founded in 1893, met in the upper floor of the two-story frame structure. The building was veneered with brick in 1937.

The neighborhoods surrounding the town's black commercial center were comprised of small, frame, vernacular dwellings such as single-cell (106 Will -- Survey Site No. 1728, razed 1986), two-room, and shotgun dwellings. While the survival rate among these turn-of-the-century residences is remarkably high, most have been substantially altered over the years. The row of shotgun dwellings along the east side of the 300 block of Wyatt Street, which comprise a small historic district being nominated to the National Register, are excellent examples of well-preserved, low-cost, black housing of the early 1900s.

Perhaps the most significant landmarks within the black community are the religious institutions. The first black church in Waxahachie was the Samaria Baptist Church which was organized soon after the Civil War. While the church building has been so severely altered that little of its historic

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fabric is visible, it remains an active and prominent church within the community. The old parsonage (Survey Site No. 853) at 603 E. Jefferson has escaped substantial modifications since its construction about 1895. Structures built by other black religious organizations include the Joshua Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church (N. R. Site No. 1907) in 1917, and the New Mount Zion Baptist Church (Survey Site No. 186) in 1927.

The booming local economy during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries spurred an era of intense development and new construction in the entire community. In 1894-95 a new courthouse was built on the public square. Regionally acclaimed architect James Riely Gordon of San Antonio designed this imposing Romanesque Revival edifice, which is the centerpiece of the Ellis County Courthouse Historic District (listed in the National Register in 1975). Rising three stories in height and strategically sited on one of the city's highest points, the courthouse (Site No. 788) remains the town's most impressive physical and architectural landmark. It also represents Waxahachie's prominence as a major cotton-producing center at the turn of the century.

The construction of the high-styled courthouse helped to raise the townspeople's awareness and appreciation of architecture. More sophisticated and ambitious projects were undertaken by prosperous individuals and institutions. The Citizens's National Bank built a Romanesque Revival structure (Site No. 1414) about the time the courthouse was completed and later erected the classically inspired facility (Site No. 1417) at 114 S. Rogers in 1927. Prominent Dallas architect C. D. Hill designed the Rogers Hotel (Site No. 544), which was built in 1912. The second Penn Building (Site No. 1552), with Neoclassical Revival detailing, was also built in 1912. All of these structures established new architectural standards for the downtown. The National Register nomination for the Ellis County Courthouse Historic District, which includes the aforementioned structures, provides a more detailed discussion of the physical and historical evolution of the downtown area.

Waxahachie's neighborhoods, like its commercial center, experienced a construction boom during the late 1800s and early 1900s. Dwellings for all social and economic classes, including laborers, clerks, store owners, cotton brokers, bankers, and others, were built throughout the city. The more affluent individuals paid cash for the construction of their residences, but for those that could not afford to pay such a large sum, alternative financing was available. A 1909 publication, intended to boost economic and industrial development in the community, states that the Waxahachie Lumber Co. (N. R. Site No. 1756) contributed to the town's residential development by "their system of encouraging the ownership of homes by erecting them and allowing the occupants to pay in installments. This system has enabled many people to own their own homes who otherwise would not have been able to do so" (Waxahachie Illustrated c. 1909: 19).

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Housing demands were so great that as existing neighborhoods were filled, new sections were opened for development. The West End and East End were popular areas for the town's more financially successful individuals. Large and impressive Victorian residences with ornate jig-sawn detailing prevailed throughout these two areas (see the West End and the Oldham Avenue historic districts within this nomination for additional information) and symbolized the wealth and social status of their owners. Local street car service was initiated by 1889 and, extending to each end of the city, influenced the town's physical growth. More modest residences, such as L-plan, modified L-plan, and other vernacular house types, were built in the neighborhoods between the West and East ends.

The vast majority of the structures built during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were erected by local lumber companies or contractors. Despite the active construction business at that time, no architects resided or based their practice in the community. One of the town's more prolific builders, E. S. Boze, sometimes advertised himself as an architect, but mechanic's liens, city directories and newspaper articles reveal him to be a contractor. The lumber companies generally relied on plans and pattern books that were published by designers in larger cities. The residence at 209 N. Grand (N. R. Site No. 967 and built for H. W. Tripett) provides a good illustration of this technique. Mechanic's liens state that C. J. Griggs, a highly regarded local builder, was to follow the plans and specifications of George Barber, a Knoxville, Tennessee architect whose drawings were sold throughout the country.

Although Waxahachie boasted no architects of its own, several of the state's leading architectural firms received commissions in the city. James Riely Gordon, as mentioned earlier, designed the county courthouse and is attributed as architect of Moffett-Cox House, also known as Rosemont (National Register, 1978). Flanders and Mood of Dallas designed the original T. J. Cole House (N. R. Site No. 157) on E. Marvin Street, in 1895; the house later burned and was substantially remodeled about 1915. C. D. Hill—whose work is most visible in the Swiss Avenue, Munger Place, and South Boulevard/Park Row historic districts in Dallas (National Register 1977, 1978 and 1979 respectively)—designed the Rogers Hotel, the Central Presbyterian Church (N. R. Site No. 1542) and possibly the McCartney House at 603 E. Marvin (N. R. Site No. 210). Hubble and Green, another prominent Dallas firm, provided plans for the Trinity University Administration Building, being nominated as part of the Second Trinity University Campus (1902-1942). Like Hill, they received numerous commissions in Swiss Avenue and other prestigious Dallas neighborhoods. The Fort Worth architectural firm of Sanguinett and Staats, well-known for their early twentieth-century high-rise office buildings, designed the Penn House (Survey Site No. 211) on W. Marvin Street.

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The town's vibrant economy at the turn of the century no doubt played a crucial role in the decision to relocate Trinity University to Waxahachie. The college was founded in 1869 by the Presbyterian Church in Teuhuacana, Limestone County, Texas, and by 1871 operated out of a massive Second Empire building (listed in the National Register, 1978). Although the school prospered, the school's regents decided to move the institution to make it more accessible to the state's more densely populated regions. Waxahachie, a town with two Presbyterian churches and located near the Dallas-Fort Worth area, was selected. On March 21, 1902, the cornerstone was laid for a Jacobethan-styled structure (Site No. 13, Second Trinity University Campus) designed by Hubble and Green of Dallas. The campus stood at the northwest edge of the city and eventually included a complex of structures. The two other surviving buildings of this period include a gymnasium (Site No. 14), built in 1926, and Drane Hall (Site No. 12), a girls dormitory built in 1911 and expanded about 1914. Both structures are included in the Second Trinity University Campus submission.

The establishment of the college also affected the physical growth of Waxahachie, as the University Addition south of the school opened a large amount of land for residential development. Street car service expanded to the area and connected the university with downtown and other parts of the city. Most of the homes built in the University Addition were constructed between 1905 and 1925, and illustrate the preference for popular architectural forms, such as bungalows, over vernacular houses which had prevailed earlier. Good examples include the Rockett House (N. R. Site No. 1055), the P. Williams House (N. R. Site No. 1085), and the Connaly House (N. R. Site No. 1062).

The town's important social and religious institutions also joined in the construction boom that hit Waxahachie in the early twentieth century. One of the most significant and certainly the most unique was the Chautauqua Auditorium (Site No. 981 and listed in the National Register, 1974). Erected in 1902, it served as the meeting place for religious, educational, and musical events as part of the Chautauqua movement which was popular in the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This may be the only surviving Chautauqua building in the state.

Most of the town's largest church groups also erected new facilities. The First Methodist Church built a sanctuary on N. College in 1905, replacing the 1893 facility which had been destroyed by fire. The 1905 structure was razed in the 1950s to make way for the construction of a grocery store, and the congregation moved to W. Marvin Street. The First Baptist Church built a new sanctuary in 1901, and ten years later local contractor C. J. Griggs erected the Main Street Christian Church. Both have since been razed. In 1917 members of the Joshua Chapel African Methodist

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Episcopal Church erected a sanctuary (N. R. Site No. 1907) that was designed by William Sidney Pittman, a black architect from St. Louis, Missouri. A graduate of Tuskegee University of Alabama, Pittman was a son-in-law of Booker T. Washington and designed churches for numerous black congregations throughout the South. He was architect of the Allen Chapel Church (National Register, 1984) in nearby Fort Worth, Tarrant County.

Both local Presbyterian churches, boosted by the relocation of the Presbyterian-supported Trinity University, erected new facilities during the early twentieth century. The congregation of Central (formerly Cumberland) Presbyterian Church hired Dallas architect C. D. Hill to design a sanctuary (N. R. Site 1542) on N. College Street in 1917, and it remains in active use by its members. Its sister church, the First Presbyterian Church, built a house of worship in 1916 on W. Main Street. This building (Site No. 640 and a contributing member of the West End Historic District) is now owned by the Ellis County Art Association and serves as an important social and educational facility for the community.

The public school system embarked on a major building program during the first decades of the twentieth century. Prior to the establishment of the city's school district, private institutions provided educational opportunities for the town's youth, but the formation of the public school system in 1884 assured that all area children would have the chance to learn. Old Marvin College served as the district's earliest educational facility, but was supplemented with schools that were built in other sections of the city. In 1904 a three-story brick edifice (Survey Site No. 155), known as Park School, was erected in front of the old main building of Marvin College. This structure has been substantially changed with numerous additions and alterations. In 1911 the Ferris or Fourth Ward School (Survey Site No. 1231) was erected on Gibson Street near the textile mill. The South Ward School (Survey Site No. 1391), a one-story brick structure, was built in 1913 for students in Bullard's Addition and other neighborhoods in the south end of town. In 1919 the two-story brick Oaklawn School provided educational facilities for the town's black students and replaced the frame structures that had previously occupied the site. The Oaklawn School was substantially remodeled in 1939. It stands abandoned and in poor condition on Wyatt Street. The Austin-based architectural firm of C. H. Page and Brother designed the classically detailed high school (Survey Site No. 133) in 1918 for the town's white students. The Central Ward School (razed) was built about 1920 near the Park School and faced onto Brown Street.

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As Waxahachie continued to grow, it offered more of the amenities generally associated with larger, more-established cities. In 1912 an interurban line connected Waxahachie to Dallas, 30 miles to the north. This electrical rail system vastly undercut the price of steam-rail passenger service to Dallas and operated on a more frequent and reliable basis. The tracks ran along Brown and N. College streets. By 1914 service extended 60 miles south to Waco. The interurban operated successfully for over 30 years, until the popular use of automobiles forced its closing in 1949.

Many of the town's citizens acquired great wealth during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and some of the more civic-minded gave land or money to help improve life within the community. Prominent farmer Nicholas P. Sims provided money for the construction and maintenance of a county library which was completed in 1905. The library (Site No. 636) instantly became a prominent educational, social, and architectural landmark in the community. As part of the park movement that swept the country around the turn of the century, Getzendaner Park (Survey Site No. 980) was established in 1914. R. W. and Helen Getzendaner, who lived at 209 N. Grand (N. R. Site No. 967), gave the land in honor of W. H. Getzendaner, a prominent local business and civic leader who promoted the establishment of a city library. The park land also included the Chautauqua Auditorium. Several years later Mrs. Quincy Getzendaner donated land for the construction of a hall for local women's clubs. The one-story brick building (Site No. 893) was built in 1925, and was named in honor of her parents, Robert and Mary Davis. It remains an important gathering place in the community, and is a contributing member of the West End Historic District.

The town's first hospital built expressly for that purpose opened in March 1921. Dr. W. C. Tenery and Dr. W. D. Boyd were instrumental in its founding and successful operation. The three-story brick structure (Survey Site No. 872), known as the Waxahachie Sanitarium, replaced a small, two-story frame building on W. Main Street that was formerly used as a school. This frame structure originally housed the Waxahachie Institute which closed soon after Trinity University moved to town. Dr. John Wallace had opened a hospital for blacks by 1948 at 438 E. Main Street.

Waxahachie served as the training site for a number of professional baseball teams, from such cities as Detroit in 1917-18, Cincinnati in 1919, Chicago in 1920, and Kansas City in 1921. While staying in Waxahachie, team members resided in the Rogers Hotel.

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Cotton production and demand maintained high levels in the post-World War I era, resulting in sustained regional growth. While the Blackland Prairies of central and north-central Texas continued to produce much of the state's cotton, the fields of south and west Texas began to grow substantial amounts of the crop. Waxahachie and surrounding areas thus began to lose their dominant position as the state's largest and most significant cotton center. With the Great Depression of the 1930s, cotton demand plummeted, thus spelling the end of Waxahachie's most prosperous era. Most of the gins, compresses, and cottonseed oil-mills were abandoned. The textile mill, long the city's most important industrial enterprise, cut production until the company was forced to close by 1934.

In the post-World War II era, Waxahachie, like much of the nation, entered the automobile age. The interurban line was discontinued in 1949, as citizens used their own cars as their primary means of transportation. Waxahachie stood at the crossroads of two federal highways, U.S. 77 and U.S. 287, which pierced the town and met at the northeast corner of the courthouse square. Although the highways proved an economic asset to the community, they also affected adversely the historic character of the old neighborhoods and the architectural integrity of the commercial buildings downtown.

Today Waxahachie is experiencing renewed growth and prosperity. Its close proximity to one of the nation's fastest-growing metropolitan areas has attracted numerous commuters to the town. Even though many of its citizens work in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex, Waxahachie boasts a healthy economy with several large manufacturing concerns, including Tyler Refrigeration Co. (which purchased and remodeled the old Waxahachie Textile Mill), Flexsteel Corporation, Owens-Corning Co., and locally owned Burleson Honey Co. Townspeople, led by Historic Waxahachie, Inc., a local preservation group, have long realized the unique and special character of the town's historic resources and have successfully restored many of the old homes and commercial buildings. The annual home tour, known as the Gingerbread Trail, has become an important local tradition and attracts visitors from all parts of the state. Like the city's historic neighborhoods, the downtown has been the scene of much restoration effort under the auspices of the Main Street Program. The town's impressive collection of historic structures has been "discovered" by many others, including film makers who have used the town as a backdrop for several major motion picture and television productions in recent years.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheets

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property See individual site forms

Quadrangle name Waxahachie, Texas

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References Forresteron, Texas

1:24000

A see individual site forms

Zone Easting Northing

B Zone Easting Northing

C Zone Easting Northing

D Zone Easting Northing

E Zone Easting Northing

F Zone Easting Northing

G Zone Easting Northing

H Zone Easting Northing

Verbal boundary description and justification

See individual site forms

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

David Moore - Project Director for HARDY HECK MOORE; Marlene Heck - architectural historian and Daniel Hardy - architecture graduate. (John Ferguson - Texas Historical Commission)
organization HARDY HECK MOORE, INC. for Historic Waxahachie, Inc. date July 1985

street & number HHM - P.O. Box 13392

telephone 512-459-4464

city or town Austin

state Texas 78711

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state X local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Curtis J. J. J.

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 8 Aug. 1986

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Patrick Anders

date 9/24/86

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: *Betty Savage*

date 9/24/86

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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